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CANNING QUESTIONS

A radio talk delivered by Miss Jean Stewart, Bureau of Home Economics, in the Home economics period of the Western Farm and Home Hour over a network of 10 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, June 16, 1932.

HOME ECONOMICS

So many housewives have been writing to the Bureau of Home Economics lately about canning, that the specialists are almost answering letters in their sleep. So this morning I'm going to answer over the air some of the more frequent queries. Perhaps this will save you the bother of writing a letter. The answers today will be about canning the early fruits. Later in the summer we'll talk about peaches and pears, tomatoes and corn.

The canning specialists recommend, first of all, that before you start to can fruits and vegetables at home, you obtain a reliable time table and temperature guide. Unfortunately, not all time tables in circulation are reliable.

Here's Question Number 1. It's about canning berries.

"What is the best way to can berries so that they won't separate from the sirup and float at the top of the jar? If they do float, does this affect the quality of the canned fruit?"

Here's what the canning specialists reply:

"No, when the fruit is turned out to serve, you'll never know the difference. But most of us want the satisfaction of putting up attractive looking jars. Also, there's a very practical point involved -- that is to get all the fruit possible into each can.

"Cooking shrinks berries. Fruit that fills a can when raw shrinks down about one-third or more when sterilized. So, if you want full containers and want to keep the berries from floating, first heat them through with just enough sugar to make them taste good. Add only a very small amount of water, just enough to keep them from scorching. Then pack the hot fruit into the hot containers, and seal them up. Process them for five minutes in a bath of boiling water. Or, if you prefer, you can process glass jars of berries in the oven. But if you do process in the oven, seal the jars only partially, or the steam collecting inside will spoil the seal."

The directions just given apply to all berries, but, as a general thing, strawberries are much better as jams and preserves than as canned fruit. When canned, you know, they are rather watery.

Question number 2: "In canning with tin cans, should one use a special kind of can for berries?"

Answer. "Yes, If you are canning berries and other red acid fruits like cherries, get the cans with a special enamel lining. They are called "R" or sanitary enamel. If you put red fruits into plain tin cans, they lose their attractive red color as a result of a harmless chemical reaction that takes place.

By the way, the lining of these "R" or sanitary enamel cans looks like bright gold. Don't confuse them with the other enameled cans called "C" which have a dull, gold-colored lining. "C" cans are used especially for canning such foods as sweet corn, green peas and lima beans. If you can red fruits in glass, keep the jars in the dark where the color of the fruit won't fade. Save the heavy paper cartons that the jars come in, and store the canned fruit in them. Or, if you keep your canned fruit on shelves in a cool dry cellar, have a curtain of oilcloth to pull down and shut off the light. In other words, store all cans of red fruits in a cool dark place.

The next question is about putting up cherries.

"Are cherries canned in the same way as berries?"

"Yes, cherries, even the sweetest kinds, are classed as acid fruit. You can process them in the water bath or the oven or in a steamer, without pressure. We generally can the large sweet cherries whole -- pits and all. With sour cherries, we take the pits out before canning so that they are ready for pies and puddings. There are two ways to can sour cherries. You can heat them with sugar to taste in an open kettle and pack them hot into the containers and process them as you do berries. Or you can pack the fruit raw in the jars and then fill the jars up with hot sirup. In this case, of course, you have to process much longer. If you are canning the sour cherries, especially for pies next winter, use a medium not a heavy sirup."

Have you ever wondered about canning fruits without sugar? Many letters ask whether fruits keep all right if they are canned without sugar.

The specialists say that for special diets and uses fruits may be canned without sugar. You heat the fruit first, simply leaving out the sugar, and pack hot into hot containers. Process in the usual way. If you need more liquid to fill up the cans, use hot fruit juice. Sometimes you get this juice from very ripe fruit, too ripe to can whole.

These are only a few of the many canning questions, but you will find answers to others in the home canning bulletin. Have you a copy of that useful booklet? It's called "Canning Fruits and Vegetables at Home" and it's number is Farmers Bulletin 1471. We'll be glad to send you a copy if you write. Then, if you want tables of time and temperatures and exact directions of any sort, write to the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics ~~xxxx~~ at Washington, D. C.

There's just time now for us to talk over plans for Sunday dinner. Here's the menu: Breaded veal cutlets with chile sauce; Buttered lima beans; Creamed spring onions; Tomato cups stuffed with diced celery and cucumber and stiff mayonnaise; Hot rolls; and Fruit ice with wafers.

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